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HISTORY OF THE

SIXTY-NINTH

REGIMENT

➤ VOLUNTEER ➤

CALVALRY

— Written by —

CAPT. R. C. RANKIN.



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HISTORY

OF THE

SEVENTH OHIO

Volunteer Cavalry.

IT being suggested that a History of the Seventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry be written, the honor was conferred upon me. Not being a historian or even a letter writer, I feel myself entirely incompetent to do justice to the Regiment that has done so much good service. In writing a historical account of the organization of this Regiment, I shall have to rely almost exclusively on memory, owing to the fact that all the Regiment's notes and papers have been captured, as will be seen before concluding this narrative.

The Seventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry was recruited on an order emanating from the War Department, that Gov. Todd, of Ohio, would raise one Regiment of Cavalry, for "Border Service," the Ohio River then being the boundary.

The organization of this Regiment was commenced and the duty of the organization was conferred on Major Malcolm McDowell, Paymaster U. S. A., and I may add here, that there is no visitor more welcome at the camp of the Seventh O. V. C., than the gallant old grandfather of the Reg't, as he is styled here. The counties ordered to raise Companies were as follows: Hamilton, three, Clermont, one; Brown, one; Adams, one; Scioto, one; Lawrence, one; Gallia, one; Meigs, one; Washington, one; Monroe, one. Lawrence and Monroe failing to raise the companies, their places were supplied by raising two in Gallia and one in Athens. As soon as recruiting was fairly under way, Major McDowell was retired and resumed his original duties as Paymaster.

Recruiting was very lively, and the Companies were all filled by the first week in September, and the Regiment was then organized as follows:

Colonel, Israel Garrard; Lieut. Colonel, George G. Minor; Majors, Wm. L. Raney, ——— Norton, and James McIntire; Adjutant, T. F. Allen; Q. M., W. M. R. Jackson; C. S., John McColgin; Surgeon, Isaac Train; Asst. Surgeons, ——— Tullis and ——— Barrett.

Non-Com., Field and Staff.—S. M., B. P. Stacy; Q. M. S., Geo. M. Ross; C. S., B. F. Powers; H. S., James Saffron; Saddler, Serg't Albert G. Sells.

Captains—Wm. A. Simpson, A. S. Brownfield, Warren, Campbell, Solomon L. Green, Lindsey, Ashburn, Higley, Wm. Lewis, R. C. Rankin, Eels, and John Leaper.

First Lieutenants—A. Hall, Santemire, Sayers, Moore, W. D. Ketterman, Copeland, Nichols, Tripp, Long, Shaw, Carr, McNight.

Second Lieutenants—A. N. Rich, Wm. Burton, Martin Shuler, Murphy, John V. Srofe, O. H. Eyler, Trago, Smith, Chase, Wambledorf and Johnson.

The Companies rendezvoused in the counties in which they were raised and received military instruction from their respective Commanders for several weeks.

In the meantime, Co. E, Capt. R. C. Rankin's Company, quartered at Ripley, Ohio, rendered valuable service to the city of Maysville, Ky., in defending her against John Morgan's command. and on the night of September 20th, 1862, crossed the Ohio River and marched to Brookville, Ky., a distance of twenty-five miles, and participated in the attack and the driving from the place, the rebels under Basil Duke, who was engaged in paroling the citizens carried away by him from Augusta, which place he had captured and burned the day previous. Capt. R. C. Rankin, with Co. E and a squad of mounted citizens from Ripley, Ohio, made a charge on the place, capturing one rebel as they went in, and having one man killed by the retreating rebels. The gallant Duke did not stand upon the order of his going, but just "went." This may be recorded as the first blood the Seventh saw in battle.

Ripley being connected with a large portion of Kentucky by turnpike roads, was selected as the place for the Regiment to rendezvous and receive instructions, which duty devolved principally on Lt. Col. Minor, who proved himself fully competent to the task. Col. Garrard's time being occupied in equipping the Regiment.

The first Battalion reached Ripley about the 1st of October, and on the 19th of October, this Battalion and twenty-five men of Co. E, under command of Capt. R. C. Rankin, all being under Lt. Col. Minor, crossed the Ohio River and made a scout to Falmouth, Ky., (in obedience to orders from Gen. Wright, Commanding Dept. of Ohio.) reaching there on the third day, and finding it occupied by Federal troops. Passing through four counties, they returned to camp at Ripley, bringing with them three prisoners captured by the advance—Capt. R. C. Rankin's twenty-five men of E Co. being the advance.

The First Battalion crossed the river about the 1st of November, and took up the line of march for Lexington, Ky., Major Rainey commanding, and joined Gen. Carter in December, accompanying that officer on his raid into East Tennessee, by the way of Pound Gap, and participated in the burning

of Carter's Station and the bridge across the Watauga River at Zollicoffer, Tenn.; returning to Kentucky, with the loss of one man killed and a few lost as prisoners, after an absence of three weeks.

Four companies broke camp and crossed the river at Maysville, Ky., on the 21st of December, and took up their march for Danville, Ky., reaching there on the 24th, Lt. Colonel commanding.

In obedience to orders of Gen. Baird, commanding at Danville, Company E, Capt. Rankin in command, was ordered to Harrodsburgh for the purpose of sending scouting parties on the different roads leading from that place, and rendered much valuable service to Gen. Baird, by keeping him posted as to the movements of John Morgan, who had invaded the State and was approaching that point.

They also captured many prisoners, with their equipments. The number captured during their stay, would more than equal the entire command under Capt. Rankin.

The duties became so arduous, that Gen. Baird sent Company L, Capt. Leaper, to assist.

The border now being on the Kentucky and Salt River hills, the remainder of the Regiment, under Col. Garrard, were brought up to join the others at Danville, Ky., reaching there about the 4th of January, 1863. The whole Regiment, (Co. E excepted, which was still on duty at Harrodsburg,) after a few weeks getting together at Danville, moved to Harrodsburg, where it remained until about the latter part of February.

About this time, the rebel Col. Luke invaded Eastern Kentucky, and the Seventh was ordered out to assist in driving him from the State.

On reaching Crab Orchard, the Regiment was divided: part under Lt. Col. Minor moved by the way of Richmond and Ervin to Hazel Green, and had a skirmish with the enemy at that place, capturing twenty-five prisoners. The remainder of the Regiment, under Col. Garrard, went to Mt. Sterling, by the way of Richmond and Winchester, charging the town and driving the rebels from it, but not in time, however, to save a portion of it from flames.

The place had been surrendered a short time previous, by Col. Ratcliffe of the 10th Kentucky Cavalry.

The enemy being hotly pursued on the Owensville road, made a stand on State Creek, four miles out, but after a sharp engagement were driven from their position, with a loss of eight killed.

About three weeks were occupied in traversing this mountainous country. The rain and snow falling almost continuously, made the roads in places impassable. The Regiment all got together at Lexington, about the first of April.

Immediately on the arrival of the regiment at Lexington, an order was issued by Gen. Gilmore, for Capt. Rankin to report with Company E to the Provost Marshal of the District. Upon doing so, the duty assigned him was to make a scout through Jessamine, Mercer, Woodford and Anderson counties, and if possible, to arrest and bring to Lexington a rebel, Col. Alexander, who had up to this time baffled all efforts made for his capture.

The scouting party returned, being successful in the capture of Col. Alexander, together with a rebel recruiting officer, met on the highway, who on being searched was found to have on his person a recruiting officer's pa-

pers authorizing him to proceed from Beech Grove, Tenn., to the counties above mentioned, to recruit for John Morgan's command, stationed at Beech Grove; also, taking from the cliffs, bordering on the Kentucky river, near Shakertown, a member of John Morgan's command concealed there.

The day after their return, this Company was sent to Cynthiana and did duty for some weeks with the 118th Ohio, in breaking up recruiting station. Col. Mott commanding.

After having completed this service, Co. E, Capt. Rankin commanding, was ordered first to Paris, thence to Carlisle, which place was reached about midnight. Being aided by a small party of citizens, he continued his march about six miles to a mill on the north-fork of Licking river where he captured a picket-post of sixteen rebel soldiers, and then returned to Paris on the following day.

In the meantime, the regiment bore a conspicuous part in the fight with Pegram's force at Dutton Hill, and just as our line was beginning to waver, a daring charge was made by the Seventh which turned the tide of battle in our favor.

In this fight we captured four hundred prisoners and four pieces of artillery.

The enemy fell back in great disorder. Among the trophies captured, the Seventh claims three battle flags; one being captured by Lieut. Cope-land, who greatly distinguished himself on that occasion for coolness and bravery.

Major Norton also deserves mention for the gallant style in which he led his battalion in the charge. Major McIntire deserves especial mention. On one occasion he penetrated the confused mass of rebels, and found himself fired on from the rear. Turning upon his horse he found he was attacked by three. The Major drew his revolver and shot one and the other two surrendered.

Col. Garrard could be found at any point along the line where his presence was most needed. This was the first fight the regiment was in as a body.

On returning to Lexington, the regiment was paid off and their faces were again turned southward. Reaching Stanford, they went into camp for a few days and then continued their march to Somerset, near the Cumberland river which had now become the border.

On the evening of the 29th of April, three companies, under Captain Green, joined two companies of the 2nd Ohio Cav., and one company of the 1st Kentucky, all under command of Capt. Carter, of the 1st Ky., crossed the Cumberland river at Smith's Ford, and after crossing a mountain, they crossed the south fork of the Cumberland, two miles from its junction with the main stream, now known as Burnside's Point, coming around in the rear of the rebel pickets at Stigall's Ferry, thereby capturing the post, one hundred and thirty in number.

After delivering the prisoners to our forces on the opposite bank at Stigall's, we took the main road to Monticello, and after marching about four miles, were attacked by a portion of the enemy's cavalry whom we soon drove back, and then continued the march until we reached the farm known as Capt. West's. Beyond this farm is a gap in the mountain, called Scott's

Gap. Here the enemy made a stand and quite a sharp little fight ensued which lasted near one hour.

It now being dusk and the enemy being driven from their position, the command went into camp for the night, Company E of the 7th, under Capt. Rankin, being left to hold the Gap. The next morning, skirmishing between the pickets commenced. The column was soon in motion moving on toward Monticello, with occasional skirmishing on the advance, the enemy gradually falling back toward the town; but a charge was made upon them which quickly hurled them through the town and over the creek to the top of a hill beyond, where they again made a stand.

In this charge, the first credit of entering the place, all chances being equal, is due the Seventh, Company E, under Capt. Rankin, leaping the fences, gaining the streets and crossing the creek, and mingled in a hand to hand fight with the flying rebels half way up the hill on the other side. The Adjutant of the 1st Kentucky, gained the head of the column and ordered them back to the Monticello side, where the command was formed in line of battle.

This gave the enemy time to reform, also. In this charge, the Seventh lost one man killed and three wounded, besides several horses.

That part of the command which stopped to throw down fences, now coming to our assistance, the enemy were soon driven to a point four miles beyond, where they got large reinforcements, as well as ourselves and a fight was made in which the enemy used considerable artillery.

In an hour our artillery came up and was put in position and a flank movement being made on the enemy's right, they were soon to be found on the retreat again.

In this engagement the rebels lost nine men killed, several wounded and twelve prisoners.

Night coming on, the command retreated to Monticello where it remained for two days, and then followed the retreating rebels across the Tennessee line.

A part of the regiment under Col. Garrard, went to Frazersville, and a detachment under Major McIntyre, went to Albany, capturing some prisoners and returned to Somerset where they remained sometime.

Nothing of interest occurred except scouting occasionally to Mett's Spring and across the river now and then, taking in the rebel pickets on the opposite bank.

On the 7th day of June, the regiment again crossed the Cumberland river and marched to Monticello where it had some fighting. On the 9th, when returning, the Seventh, O. V. C., being the rear guard, was followed by the enemy and attacked at West's farm, at which place a severe fight ensued in which the Seventh lost several men in killed and wounded.

On the morning of the 10th, a detachment from the Seventh of 150 picked men and officers as follows: Capt. R. C. Rankin, commanding the detachment, Capt. Warren, Lts. Carr, Ketterman, Rich, Shuler, and Srofe, left Somerset and joined Col. Sanders at Mt. Vernon. A day or two was spent in making preparations for a raid. Everything being ready, on the morning of the 18th we took up our line of march, crossing the Cumberland

river at Williamsburg, thence over Jelico mountains to Wartsburg where we captured 105 prisoners, they being utterly surprised, having no knowledge of our movements until we were upon them.

We also captured a supply train and destroyed a large amount of ordnance, Q. M. and C. S. stores.

This being the point from which Gen. Pegram drew his supplies, he being stationed at this time on the Cumberland river in front of Gen. Carter's forces.

The prisoners being all paroled, their arms destroyed, we moved on toward Kingston.

Considerable skirmishing occurred with the advance, when we made a sudden move to the left, crossed the Clinch river and moved out toward Lenoir's Station.

When within one mile of this place, we suddenly came upon a rebel camp at daylight capturing their guns, a battery complete. The number of prisoners captured there and at the Station were 132. We burned the depot which was well filled with munitions of war of every kind and description.

Here I will relate an incident that took place: As the column moved by the Station, owing to the bursting of shells and the explosion of powder in the burning building, the command was compelled to take the fields to avoid danger. Passing a man plowing corn with a fine mule, he said, "that is one of your Yankee tricks, is it?" Yes, said a soldier with a worn out horse, "and I will show you another." So dismounting, he put his saddle on the mule and left him his jaded horse.

Being now on the Virginia and East Tennessee Railroad, we commenced the destruction of it by tearing up the rails, burning all the culverts and bridges.

Reaching Knoxville after night, we moved around to the north side of the city and attacked the place in the morning.

In this engagement, Capt. Rankin received orders from Col. Sanders to send 50 of his men out on our right to skirmish, and to support the artillery with the remainder of his command, which was one section of Battery D, First Ohio.

We fought until 9 o'clock, A. M., capturing 40 prisoners and killed 9 rebels, among them a Capt. McClung.

Our loss was two killed and a few wounded.

Then falling back, we struck the railroad east of the place where we again commenced tearing up the track.

We were saluted with the enemy's artillery until noon, shelling the woods we had left.

Moving on to Strawberry Plains, we destroyed everything as we went and reaching that place late in the evening, where considerable fighting took place, which resulted in our occupying the town, capturing six pieces of artillery and over 100 prisoners, with slight loss to us.

Here we burned the bridge that spans the Holston river, 1600 feet in length, including trestle work, besides the depot and store houses well filled with Q. M. and C. S. stores.

After resting a few hours, we moved out on the road toward New Mar-

ket and on to Mossy Creek, where we destroyed a confederate machine shop and a large amount of grain, and burnt the bridge over Mossy Creek; in all, we destroyed over 3000 feet of bridges and trestle work.

This being done and having destroyed 60 miles of railroad, the head of our column was turned northward, crossing the Clinch river and moving toward Cumberland Gap.

Skirmishing now commenced in our rear, the detachments of the Second and Seventh being the rear guard.

The column kept pushing on, crossing Chinch mountain into Powill's Valley, and on reaching the Knoxville and Cumberland Gap road, learned that the enemy were in our front.

Not wishing to travel any further in that direction the column was turned toward Knoxville.

After traveling a few miles in that direction, we came upon the enemy's wagon train, which fell into our hands, they supposing it perfectly safe on this road; no guards had been left with it.

After burning the train and paroling the prisoners, 32 in number, it now being 12 o'clock at night, the column headed for Roger's Gap, which was made in the afternoon of the next day.

Finding this Gap well guarded with artillery and infantry, the command halted for a short time for consultation. The result of this was as follows: A strong line of skirmishers were to be shown to the enemy, the artillery to be put in position loaded with shell, spiked and wheels cut down. The detachment of the Seventh being the rear guard was ordered to remain in position one hour after the column moved, which movement was made to the left and around a spur of the mountain out of sight, striking the valley again, five miles further down at Childer's Gap, finding one regiment of the enemy's cavalry, which made a hasty retreat down the valley after receiving one volley from the First Tennessee mounted Infantry, which accompanied our expedition.

The rear guard closing up and the way in our front being clear the command commenced the descent, crossed the valley and ascended the mountain on the other side.

When the rear guard had got one-third the way up the mountain, the enemy could be seen moving in two columns.

The infantry and artillery finding that they had been foiled in their efforts to capture our command, were coming down the valley, while their cavalry were feeling their way up the valley.

Our rear guard were placed in a position to receive them in case any attempt should be made to attack us in the rear.

As the approaching columns neared each other, it now being dark, and each supposing the other to be the raiding "Yanks," at once engage each other.

Capt. Rankin, commanding the rear guard, not being interested in this fight, nor caring which gained the day, ordered his command forward and followed the main column, it having continued its march and being now out of sight.

The night being very dark and no road, not even a path to follow nor

any mounted guide left to guide them, they worked their way over rocks and timber in the direction they supposed the column had moved, and became scattered.

And after climbing around over the rocks, amid the darkness of the night, I found myself on the highest peak of the mountain, accompanied by one man. I wandered about for some time to see if I could find any trace of the column, and found no trace and heard no human voice save the tumult at the foot of the mountain.

Inasmuch, as the author did not join his command until reaching London, Ky., and nothing of interest occurring except the leaving of three hundred horses in the mountains by the command, he asks the privilege of narrating his own adventures after he became separated from the command:

I struck out in what I supposed a northerly direction and after passing over several high ridges and coming to a cliff that had to be descended, and not thinking it safe to make the trial at night, we spread our blanket down, tied our horses and went to sleep, being very much exhausted; and upon waking in the morning found the sun high up and no noise to be heard save the singing of the birds and the gnawing of my faithful horse on the trees. I at once arose and set out to find some place to make my exit, but finding no way to get my horse down this cliff other than southward, I was compelled to abandon him, a thing that gave me considerable uneasiness of mind; I hated to part with so valuable a servant that had carried me safely through the campaign of '61, under Gen. Fremont, through Kentucky and Tennessee to Corinth, Miss., back to Ohio and through all the wanderings of the 7th O. V. C., including this masterly "raid," being yet good in flesh and unbroken in spirit; to part with such a friend was no light affair. But with all the horrors of Libby Prison on one hand and life and liberty on the other, I was not long in making up my mind which course to pursue.

I stripped my horse of everything and bid him adieu. Taking a strap from the saddle, I buckled my blankets together, ran my saber through, threw it over my shoulder and began the descent, and upon reaching the foot found myself in a deep dell, surrounded by high peaks of craggy rocks. The timber being undergrown with laurel through which ran a brook of clear water.

After refreshing myself, I followed the course to the stream for about two miles which brought me to a stream known as Clear Fork, which I followed for a few miles, coming to a miserable old hut in which lived two old people, who had passed their four score years, and in coming up to this hovel I heard considerable talking.

I sent my companion close to the hut to eaves drop, and finding who were its occupants, when he returned he reported "all right"

On entering the house I found ten or twelve of our own soldiers, among them a grand son of the occupants of the house.

The old man was grinding corn on a hand mill, while the old lady was baking bread and cakes for the hungry soldiers. I ate a few morsels, and during the time I explained to them my situation and where my horse had been left.

The old gentleman gave me some encouragement by saying he thought

he could get the horse. I told him he should have fifty dollars upon delivering the horse to me, and he at once started in search of him, while I went up on the side of the mountain; spread my blanket and went to sleep.

The old man returned in the evening without the horse. I procured a guide and set by a foot-path over the mountains, traveling all night, reaching London, Ky., twenty-four hours in advance of the command. The column coming up, we continued our march until reaching Lancaster, on the 1st day of July, being twenty days out.

The men suffered greatly for want of sleep and from the swelling of their limbs, caused by constant riding.

In two instances where men fell asleep in the center of the column, everything in the rear of them was halted, and they also fell asleep and remained so an hour or two.

The regiment during this time was actively engaged in picketing and scouting the country along the Cumberland river, and on one or two occasions went into Tennessee to divert General Pegram's attention from the "raiders."

About this time, John Morgan invaded the State of Kentucky, on his grand raid through Indiana and Ohio.

The regiment, under its Colonel, joined in the pursuit, following him to the Ohio river at Brandenburg, crossing over into Indiana, and following him in his circuitous route through the States of Indiana and Ohio, and participating in the fight at Buffington's Island, July 20th, 1863.

In the meantime the detachment of the 7th that was on the Sander's raid, were at Camp Nelson refitting.

Information being received that two companies of Morgan's command which had been recruited in the vicinity of Harrodsburg, Ky., (numbering one hundred and ten men) had been cut off from the main command and were scattered about over the country, staying with their friends, and owing to Capt. Rankin's knowledge of that part of the State, he was ordered to take what men he could arm and equip and proceed there at once.

Taking twenty-six of his own company, they in a period of ten days, captured eighty-four of that number, including two officers.

Great credit is due to the colored people for the information they gave.

Another detachment of the 7th joined Col. Sweeny's command of detachments and took part in the fight with Scott's Cavalry at Richmond, Ky., July 28th, 1863, and made a brilliant saber charge against the same command at Crab Orchard, (Capt. Leaper commanding detachment,) skirmishing with them at Stanford, and following them on their retreat to the Cumberland river, compelling them to drop one section of artillery, said to be the same we abandoned in the mountains on the Sander's raid.

After the capture of John Morgan, the regiment was disbanded for fifteen days and allowed to visit their homes.

At the expiration of that time, the regiment was got together at Cincinnati and marched to Stanford, Ky., preparatory to their march to Knoxville, Tenn., under Gen. Burnside.

The regiment broke camp about the 20th day of August, moving by the

way of Crab Orchard and London, crossing the Cumberland river at Williamsburg, about the 25th.

Here, one battalion of the 7th, under Major McIntyre, was thrown out in front as the advance of Gen. Burnside's command, and held that post of honor during the whole march, until they reached the railroad at Lenoir Station.

A considerable force of the enemy being at London, and some fighting going on, the regiment was ordered to that point, and on reaching there found the rebels gone and the bridge that spanned the Tennessee river, in flames.

The regiment then counter-marched, reaching Knoxville the next day. Resting two days, we took up our line of march for Cumberland Gap, skirmishing with the enemy at Taswell and Powell's river, reaching the Gap and besieging that place three days.

At the end of that time, September 9th, that stronghold surrendered its garrison, consisting of two thousand, six hundred men, under General Frazier.

On the day previous to its surrender, a detail of officers penetrated the rebel pickets lines, much to the chagrin of Gen. Frazier, they were taken in headquarters, without being hoodwinked; of course they used their eyes and saw just what they went to see, the condition of the enemy.

Gen. Frazier immediately ordered them out of his lines which order was complied with.

That night they returned, not by the picket post however, and burned the mill inside the rebel lines, thus cutting off their rations, which may have had something to do with his sudden surrender.

They came back to camp unmolested and without the honor of a rebel escort.

On the next morning after the surrender, the 7th started back to Knoxville, and on the third day reached that city and went into camp. Remaining there only a few days they started eastward on the railroad, but meeting with no resistance until reaching Johnson's Station, a distance of one hundred miles.

The command moved on to Zollecoffer, and not being able to capture the garrison there guarding the bridge across the Watauga river, they returned to Jonesboro, remaining there one week, one battalion under Capt. Copeland, doing the provost duty of town scouting and pressing horses.

The enemy attacked the command on the 28th of September and compelled it to retreat down the railroad as far as Bull's Gap, where we stayed several days.

On the 10th of October, we started eastward again and had a fight at Blue Springs, losing several men killed and wounded, among them, Captain Higly, a most valuable officer, who was commanding a battalion and was killed in the thickest of the fight while encouraging and leading on his men.

The rebels held their ground until a detachment of the 9th army corps came up, charging them and driving them from the field at dusk.

They retreated during the night, and our command pursued them in the morning, following closely all the next day, and had a spirited skirmish at

Raytown in which several were lost on both sides. Night coming on, we went into camp, continuing our pursuit in the morning as far as Jonesboro, and on the following day we moved toward Bluntsville, camping for the night, a few miles from town.

One battallion under Capt. Copeland, was ordered to make a scout to this place, but meeting the rebel pickets, he returned to camp, losing one man killed, James Barnes of Co. E.

The next day, October the 14th, the column moved on toward the town driving the rebels from the place.

They continued their retreat through Zollecoffer and Bristol. We followed and burnt the bridge at Zollecoffer, on our way and captured at Bristol two locomotives and fifty cars, which were all destroyed, besides a considerable amount of commissary store.

The men carrying away all the sugar they could manage.

The task being accomplished, the command fell back through Bluntsville and Kingsport to Rogersville, pressing all the horses that could be found, and remained there sometime, nothing particular occurring save the usual scouting in an enemy's country.

About this time the regiment was deprived of its Colonel, he being placed in command of a brigade, and Major McIntyre succeeded to the command.

About the 4th of November, Gen. Shackelford, commanding the Cavalry Division, received information that a rebel force, 4000 strong, was approaching Rogersville by the way of Jonesville, Va.

He therefore ordered Col. Garrard to send a scouting party to that place.

A detail of 50 men from the Seventh being made, Capt. Rankin was ordered to take command. Before the scouts returned, the enemy made their appearance by the way of Kingsport.

In order that you may fully understand the event which I am about to describe, it is necessary that I should describe the country and the locality, our camp and its approaches.

The country here is alternately mountain and valley, running nearly parallel east and west, with occasional narrow passes through the mountains from one valley to another, these valleys losing themselves every few miles in the main valley of the Holston river.

The brigade of which the Seventh formed a part was camped in the main Holston Valley about three miles above Rogersville.

The hospital, commissary and quartermaster's department, with a provost guard, occupied the town.

Great caution was used by Col. Garrard in guarding these approaches, and for this purpose one company of the Tennesseans was kept in Carter Valley, five miles from the brigade camp. This Valley being the first one north of the Holston, they sent scouting parties daily, over into Stanley Valley and Hickory Cave, which are further north.

On the night of the 5th of November, scouts reported the enemy advancing in force down the Holston Valley from Kingsport.

Lieut. Murphy was ordered to take two companies of the Seventh, on

the night of the 6th, which was very dark and the rain pouring down in torrents, and make a scout up the Holston Valley.

After marching about six miles he met the enemy's advance and at once engaged them, and notified the Colonel of their approach.

The enemy finding their advance resisted, threw a force across the mountain into Carter Valley, which was estimated at 2000 strong, and upon reaching the valley they dashed upon this Tennessee company capturing and scattering them.

This Valley now being cleared, they continued down it about two miles to a road crossing into Holston Valley, which road struck the Valley about the center of our brigade camp.

Here their force was divided, one half going across the mountain, secreted themselves under the cover of the night in a cedar grove, near the road leading down the main valley to Rogersville.

The other part of their command continued down the valley to where it comes into the Holston, one-half mile above Rogersville, where they again divided their force, leaving a part here and sending the remainder around a spur of the mountain, striking the valley one-half mile below the town.

They closed in on the place, capturing and scattering everything that was there.

This part of their programme being successfully accomplished, they moved up the valley on to the camp. In the meanwhile their main force was passing slowly down the valley, compelling the small force in their front to retire, and giving time for the force below to accomplish the task assigned them, and attack the camp from that side.

As they approached the camp, Col. Garrard had the train on the road, headed toward Rogersville, and the brigade drawn up in line, artillery placed in position on an eminence, commanding the approach from Kingsport.

While in this position we were attacked in the rear by the force coming up the valley.

At this instant, the force before mentioned as being secreted in the cedar thicket, being in close proximity to our left flank, poured a volley into the battalion of the Seventh, being not more than fifty yards distant, and made a simultaneous charge upon the wagon train and capturing it.

They were seen in the thicket by our battalion, but were supposed to be the Tennessee homeguards.

At the same time a charge was made front and rear.

Finding the command attacked on three sides, each force equaling our own in numbers, there was no alternative but to make our way across the Holston river at the nearest ford.

This being done, the regiment was formed in line on the opposite bank of the river, but the Seventh had already lost over 100 men, and the Second Tennessee over 500, and both sections of the artillery being captured, the command fell back to Morristown, a distance of 30 miles.

In the meantime, the scouts who were sent out to Jonesville, returned to within three miles of camp, and on hearing of the disaster, turned north, passing Clinch Mountain, through Little War Gap, coming down Poor Val-

ley until they struck the Cumberland Gap and Morristown road, and joined the regiment at Morristown the next day.

In this affair, the Seventh lost everything in the shape of books and papers, camp and garrison equipage, all the train and everything but what was carried away by the men on their horses.

Capt. Rankin having joined his regiment, as before stated, was ordered to take two hundred men and reconnoiter as near Rogersville as he deemed safe.

Finding nothing in his way, he entered the place, the rebels having retreated immediately after paroling the sick and wounded, which the Captain found in as good condition as circumstances would admit.

The regiment resting at Morristown two days, then moved eastward through Russelsville and camped near that place a few days, and leaving this camp they went on up the railroad, through Bull's Gap, and on toward Greenville.

About this time, Longstreet besieged Knoxville, and the rebel forces under Jones and Williams moved down from Virginia, compelling us to fall back.

The command fell back by the way of Rogersville to Bean's Station and thence over Clinch Mountain to Sycamore creek, where the Seventh camped a few days, doing picket duty on the Clinch river and all the roads leading eastward.

We lost several men on picket at Clinch river.

While stationed at this place, Serg'ts. Little and Davis carried dispatches through the rebel lines to General Burnside, in Knoxville, at different times.

From this, the Seventh went to Taswell, remained there a few days and moved out on the Knoxville and Cumberland Gap road, crossing Clinch river at Walker's Ford.

The siege now being raised at Knoxville, and the rebels moving up the railroad eastward, our cavalry was engaged in annoying their flanks, up to Beall's Station.

On the morning of the 12th of Dec., 1863, the Seventh O. V. C. and the Ninth Michigan Cavalry, with one section of artillery, under command of Col. Garrard, moved in the direction of Morristown, and when within one and half miles of that town we met the enemy, and after some skirmishing, the Seventh was dismounted and thrown forward to engage them, who were strongly posted on a wooded hill, with artillery commanding the approach.

After an engagement with them, which lasted nearly an hour, our lines moved forward gradually through open fields until within one hundred and fifty yards of their lines.

Meanwhile, the Ninth Michigan Cavalry was moved down a ravine and around a hill out of sight of the enemy, attacking them on their flank and rear, compelling them to scatter in great confusion, leaving their dead and wounded in our hands.

Our command passed on, driving the rebels beyond the town.

The enemy lost heavily in killed and wounded, and among them a Lieut. Colonel.

Our loss was one man killed; Sergt. Newport, of Co. H, Seventh regiment, with several wounded.

It now being quite dark and no support near, the command fell back to Beall's Station.

On the morning of the 14th, Col. Garrard's brigade again advanced on Morristown, but finding no enemy there, moved on toward Russelsville a few miles, drove in the pickets and moved forward, and when near Russelsville, found a large force of the enemy drawn in line awaiting our approach.

The Second and Seventh O. V. C. were at once ordered forward to attack them, the Ninth Michigan being held in reserve.

We fought them till near dark, and failing to accomplish anything and losing several killed and wounded fell back to Beall's Station.

On the 16th, we fought Longstreet's force at Bean's Station, also on the 17th, and at Rutledge on the 18th.

Our troops falling back all the time toward Knoxville, the cavalry doing the fighting, losing several men killed, wounded and captured.

We fell back to Stone Mills, camping there a few days.

Here the regiment was paid by Major McDowell.

Leaving this point, the command crossed the Holston river, struck the railroad at New Market, and from there went south to Dandredge on the French Broad river.

On the 24th, we had a spirited engagement with the enemy and was compelled to fall back toward New Market, losing one man killed and several captured.

On the 27th, we moved up the railroad to Mossy creek, and from this period up to the 24th of January, had continual fighting and skirmishing, driving the enemy a few miles toward Morristown and in turn being driven back by them.

On the morning of the 14th of January we moved again to Dandridge, and on the 16th moved out on the Morristown road, having sharp skirmishing, losing near 50 men out of the Brigade. Fell back again to Dandridge.

On the following day a general engagement took place, which lasted from nine o'clock a. m. until late in the night.

From causes unknown to the writer, (who had charge of the advance posts), at 12 o'clock at night the 7th which was on the front line, received orders to commence falling back in small detachments, when a retrograde movement commenced, in which retreat our forces lost several hundred, principally infantry, of which we had a large force which seemed to have been there for some other purpose than fighting, as they were never brought into action.

We crossed the Holston river and continued our retreat to Knoxville, the enemy following to within a few miles of the city.

From here we crossed the river moving south-west through Sevierville, and on up the south side of French Broad river, capturing two pieces of artillery at Fair Garden, when we fell back through Mears and Tuchalechy cove, to Little river, where we camped near one week, during which time a detachment of the brigade were sent into North Carolina to capture Thomas'

Legion, which was made up mostly of Indians, (Thomas being formerly an Indian agent.)

The expedition was successful, they brought back 50 prisoners, but not without heavy loss on our own side.

In the meantime one battallion of the 7th was sent back through Mears to Tuchlechy to create a diversion and hold the Gap while the expedition was being made.

Our camp was then moved to Maryville where we remained a few days scouting and skirmishing continually.

From here we moved back to Knoxville, making scouts occasionally on the south side of the river toward Maryville and on the north side as far as Strawberry Plains.

After remaining here about ten days the regiment moved out to Buffalo creek a distance of forty miles.

As we had to subsist exclusively off of the country for forage and provisions for men and the horses, and the supply becoming exhausted our horses were reduced to skeletons and were no longer able to do duty.

Fifty of the strongest horses were selected from each Regiment accompanied by Col. Garrard and moved east as far as Russellville, where they remained two weeks scouting and skirmishing continually, having in some instances hand to hand engagements.

In the meanwhile the regiment returned to the vicinity of Knoxville and from there went out Clinch river to Wallace's road, remaining there a few days it returned to Knoxville, being joined by the 50 men above mentioned.

We left on the 24th of March, 1864.

It is conceded by all parties that the campaign in East Tennessee, under Gen. Burnside was the hardest campaign that has been experienced since the commencement of this great struggle for the perpetuity of our nation.

The regiment reached Paris, Ky., April the 5th, camping in that vicinity a few days, and then moving to Nicholasville where the work of refitting was commenced.

Major Gen. Stoneman commanding the cavalry in this department.

Nothing of interest occurred here except that of sending companies into different counties to protect the Provost Marshals, while they were enrolling the negroes.

About the 10th of June it was ascertained that John Morgan was moving toward Lexington. Gen. Stoneman having started with two brigades two weeks previous to Georgia, Col. Garrard's brigade was all that were left in that immediate vicinity.

On the 10th Col Garrard moved his command to Lexington reaching there a few hours after Morgan had left, who had entered the place in the morning, robbed the banks and many of the stores of their valuables before he departed.

After resting a few hours we continued our march to Paris reaching there about daylight the following morning.

Here 200 men were sent out under Capt. Rankin to make a reconnoissance toward Georgetown, after moving in that direction about 16 miles, he

met a part of Morgan's command, routed and drove them two miles in the direction of Cynthiana, returned and reported the same to Gen. Burbridge.

That night Gen. Burbridge moved for Cynthiana, Col. Garrard's brigade being in the rear.

At day-light skirmishing commenced a mile or two from that place.

Gen. Burbridge soon had his whole force engaging the rebels.

Col. Garrard's brigade composed of the 7th O. V. C., 9th Mich. V. C., and one battallion of the 15th Kentucky cavalry were formed in columns of battallions in the rear of the lines, being held in reserve.

The fighting now became general, and the center of the line began to waver, seeing this Col. Garrard ordered the 9th Mich. to move around Burbridge's right flank and charge the enemy, mounted. The battallion of Kentucky cavalry was dismounted and formed on the extreme left of our line. The 7th O. V. C. was ordered to move around our left flank and charge the enemy, mounted.

The fences were quickly thrown down and the 7th had moved scarcely 600 yards, when they were met by Humphrey Marshal's brigade, making a flank movement on the left of our line and in the rear, when a gallant charge was made by Co. H, commanded by Capt. Hall, resulting in the capture of thirty-six rebels.

A second charge was made immediately by the First battallion, under Capt. Greene with a similar result, but was exposed to a heavy fire from behind a stone fence. Immediately after this a third charge was made under Capt Rankin, which was the final rout of the enemy, driving them over a bluff on the Licking river, to where they had left their horses. Mounting their horses they moved down the rail road through Cynthiana, hotly pursued by our troops, driving them through the streets and into the river, killing, wounding and drowning many.

In this affair our loss did not exceed fifty in killed and wounded. Among the killed was Lt. McKnight, a brave and gallant officer.

The enemy's loss in killed, wounded and prisoners, was near seven hundred. Many of their wounded bore marks of the saber. During the fight there were many daring deeds of personal bravery, which deserves personal mention.

Col. Garrard was in the thickest of the fight, often in advance of the lines giving personal direction during the fight. Lt. Col. Minor was also on hand doing his part nobly.

Capt. Allen, of Col. Garrard's staff, and Adj't Mitchell, both deserve mention for coolness and bravery.

Capt. Allen, personally distinguished himself, for which he received the rank Brevet Lt. Col. at the close of the war.

Capt. Rankin deserves particular mention for entering the rebel column and cutting off forty-seven men in the following manner:

Upon reaching the bluff and seeing the rebels mounting their horses and moving down the railroad, wheeled his horse to the right, passed through a gate, then to the left down a lane near the railroad ordering his men to follow; Finding himself alone he halted for a few moments to wait for his men, and on seeing there was some impediment in the way of the rebels caused by

a cattle dyke, which they were compelled to pass over or swim the Licking river, he drew his saber and entered the columns cutting it in two, using his saber right and left as he passed up the track to the dyke, the enemy passing on either side, and thereby he cut off and held all that had yet to cross the dyke, which proved to be forty-seven in number together with their horses.

They did not however throw down their arms and surrender until four or five men came to the Captain's assistance.

The above facts are verified by the affidavits of three reliable men.

Arrangements being made to take them to the rear, the Captain followed on after the flying enemy—and nearing the town, crossed the Licking bridge and passing down about six hundred yards on the opposite side of the river.

Five rebels ran out of town, and taking refuge behind a shop which stood on the bank of the river. On seeing them the Captain drew his revolver and ordered them dismount and throw down their arms, which they did.

He then ordered them to the water's edge and to sit down, which they also obeyed, where he guarded them until one of our men, who had been taking prisoners to the rear came up when the Captain ordered him to take them to the rear. (This making fifty-two men.) How are you "southern chivalry," with your "five to one."

This statement is also verified by the affidavit of James Thomas, at present of Caldwell, Kansas, a justice of the peace.

There are others who are willing to file their affidavit to the above statements but as the mouth of two witnesses establish one point further proof is not deemed necessary, nor would I even asked this were it not for the fact that there are always a few officers and men just bold enough to follow far enough in the rear to be out of harm's way, and to gather up trophies on the battle-field; which had been passed over by the actual fighting men of the command, who would not stop to gather trophies so long as they could deal a blow on the enemy.

They are first to criticize the acts of those who are in the first ranks; and raise the question, "where are your trophies?" There is not a true soldier in our army but will bear me out in my statement.

The enemy were here scattered; some going out through Owen county, while Morgan himself took the pike toward the Ohio river through Claysville, crossing the Maysville and Lexington pike at Mayslick, and on through Mt. Sterling. Col Garrard's brigade following in his trail picking up stragglers until we lost him in the mountains of eastern Kentucky in his retreat to Pound Gap.

Thence we returned by way of Lexington to Nicholasville where we camped for a short time recuperating our men and horses.

Moving to Camp Nelson, we were paid on the 3rd of July, to June 30th 1864.

On the following morning, July 4th, we set out on our long march to Atlanta, Ga., crossing the Tennessee river at Kingston, passing through Athens, Cleveland and all the towns between that place and Atlanta, reaching the works around that place July 24th, and reporting to Gen. Stoneman to whose command we then belonged.

We were ordered to join him on his expedition to Macon, Ga., which expedition was to move at 9 o'clock on the following morning.

Lt. Col. Minor, on his return to the regiment after dark, missed his way and did not join us until about 12 o'clock, thereby the regiment was saved the dishonor of being made prisoner before Macon, on Gen. Stoneman's surrender. Company D, however, being his escort, was surrendered with him.

The regiment was immediately put on picket on the left flank of our army.

On the 26th, Col. Garrard's brigade was dismounted and put in the trenches, the Seventh occupying the extreme left of our army, which position they held while the terrible engagement of that day took place.

This being the same ground that was so desperately fought over during the 22nd,—the day the gallant McPherson fell.

The next day, we were moved to the right, the Seventh being on the extreme right during the fierce fight of the 28th,—the rebels making seven different bayonet charges, and were repulsed each time, by Gen. Howard's command.

When the grand flank movement commenced on the right, which ultimately gave us possession of Atlanta, Col. Garrard's brigade bore a conspicuous part, for there was scarcely a position gained that was not first gained by Col. Garrard's cavalry, and in many instances we fought the enemy in front, until the infantry came up and intrenched themselves in our rear.

This being done, they would send a brigade to relieve us, and we would be placed further out on the flank.

On the first of September, near Rough and Ready Station, which is south of Atlanta, on the road leading to Macon, Capt. Rankin commanding a battalion of the Seventh, was the first to find the works evacuated at this point.

On reporting the same to Gen. Thomas, he was ordered to return and go through the works and gain a high ridge road, about a mile and a half beyond the intrenchments, and on gaining the road, to take the end leading toward Atlanta and go as far as he deemed practicable.

On returning to the works, he found it occupied by Gen. Cooper's division of infantry, with a line of skirmishers in front skirmishing with the enemy.

Upon reaching this line, the Captain dismounted his battalion, leaving number four to hold horses, deployed as skirmishers and moved them directly through the infantry lines, through woods to fields and fields to woods until they gained the road above mentioned.

This being done, the horses were ordered to be brought forward. The infantry also came forward and moved along the road leading to the Station, which was less than one mile off.

Upon the arrival of the horses, the battalion mounted and moved toward Atlanta.

After proceeding a mile and a half they received a volley from the enemy, secreted in the woods, whereupon a fight took place which lasted till dark, resulting in our driving the enemy about a mile and a half further, af-

ter which the Captain returned to his picket post which he had occupied the night previous, at the crossings of the Atlanta, Jonesboro, Shoal creek and McDonald roads.

Atlanta was evacuated the following day, and a general engagement took place at Jonesboro, twenty miles south of Atlanta, resulting in a heavy loss to both sides.

In the night, the enemy fell back, the cavalry followed to Lovejoy's Station, six miles further south, being on the left of our army, occupying the McDonald and Fayetteville road, nine miles south-east of Jonesboro. We remained at this point on picket one week, where we saw fighting more or less every day.

Leaving this point, we moved back and went into camp near Decatur, which is six miles east of Atlanta on the railroad leading to Augusta.

During our campaign in Georgia, we subsisted chiefly upon the country, which was gathered in by foraging parties, detached for that purpose, and under the command of an officer.

As a general thing, some of the parties would be skirmishing with the enemy while the remainder would be gathering forage.

Skirmishing, while in Georgia, was more of an every day business than otherwise.

When General Hood set his flank machine in operation and was followed by a portion of General Sherman's command, the Seventh remained at Atlanta with the 23rd corps, and was engaged in those mammoth foraging expeditions of which you have read the newspaper accounts.

We continued in this business until Gen. Sherman returned to Atlanta and commenced his "masterly retreat" on Richmond, via Savanna, Ga., Charleston and Columbia, S. C., when we turned over our horses and arms to complete the mounting and arming of Gen. Kilpatrick's cavalry, and returned to Nashville, arriving there on the 15th of November, 1864.

On the 25th, Col. Garrard was put in command of two regiments, the Seventh O. V. C. and Tenth Tennessee.

The brigade formerly commanded by Col. Garrard, the Seventh excepted, it having been assigned to Gen. Kirkpatrick's command prior to our leaving Atlanta, and accompanied him on the Sherman expedition.

Lt. Col. Minor was put in command of a dismounted cavalry camp near Nashville, and Capt. Rankin in command of the regiment, by order of Gen. Wilson, commanding cavalry corps, C. C. M. D. M.

The regiment was mounted, armed and equipped, under the superintendent of Captain Rankin, and started for Columbia, Tenn.

On reaching Spring Hill, it was ordered to take the left-hand road to Hardison's ford, on Duck river, to support Col. Capron, and on reaching there, found him engaging the enemy at the ford.

The Seventh was formed in columns of squadrons in the rear of two brigades.

Company A, Captain Ketterman, was sent to watch a crossing a little down ways the river from where we were.

Companies B and C were ordered to make a scout of three miles on the road leading to Columbia, under Lieuts. Burton and Shuler.

Company E was ordered to make a scout up the river five miles, under Lieut. Srofe.

Soon after this, the brigade train was ordered to move out on the road leading to Franklin, with a guard of one company.

The train had not more than straightened on the road, when Companies B and C found a strong force of the enemy in their front.

Company E was cut off, the enemy having got between it and the command, and about the same time the head of the wagon train was attacked which created a stampede in the train.

Capt. Rankin wheeled two companies into position and moved out to meet the enemy, ordering Adj't. Mitchell to bring out the remainder as soon as the wagon train could be got into our rear.

A volley was poured into the enemy by the two companies already in position and a saber charge was immediately made, the remainder of the regiment coming into position in time, thereby driving the enemy from the road and held them in check until the train and the brigade that was fighting at the river could be got out.

This fighting continued until 9 o'clock, P. M., when Col. Garrard, who had joined us, ordered the command to fall back.

In this affair the timely action of the Seventh saved the entire brigade and train from capture, but with the loss of near one hundred men killed, wounded and captured, including Capt. Ketterman, and the whole of Co. A, also our regimental colors, for which the enemy had no credit, as it was captured in the following manner: It being quite dark and everything having passed the road, the Colonel wished to fall back and asked some one to go and notify Capt. Rankin, who was a short distance off, of his movement.

The Color Serg't tendered his services and immediately started on his mission.

The fighting men at this point were not more than thirty yards apart, and the Serg't rode directly into the rebel lines and was captured.

The Captain brought off his command and fell back, about six miles across Flat creek, leaving our dead and wounded on the field.

In this fight, much honor and credit are due to the officers and men of the Seventh for the bold manner in which they struck the enemy. It was this that gave us success, for we were far inferior in point of numbers.

Private John Turner of Co. E. deserves especial mention in this, that he was bearing the guidon of his company, and while running the guantlet of the enemy was thrown from his horse, but held fast to his colors and joined his command, after remaining six days in the enemy's lines, bringing his colors with him.

On the following day, the most desperate engagement perhaps of the war, all things considering, of Franklin took place.

The Seventh O. V. C. occupied the left flank of the 23rd A. C., as they faced the enemy.

We continued our operations on the flank of Gen. Thomas' army until it reached the fortifications around Nashville.

About the 1st of December, the regiment crossed the Cumberland river and was engaged in guarding ferries below Nashville, patrolling the country as

far as Harpeth Shoals, and pressing in horses until the 13th, when we moved to Edgefield opposite Nashville.

Here the cavalry command was reorganized.

The Seventh was assigned to the First Brigade, Sixth Division, Brig-Gen. Johnson, commanding. Col. Garrard having been returned to his command of the Seventh, and Col. Harrison, of Indiana, commanding the brigade.

On the 14th, all the cavalry was brought from the north to the south side of the Cumberland river, and on the following morning, the 15th, at an early hour, everything was in motion.

Our division occupied the extreme right of our army.

As soon as the fog was sufficiently cleared away we marched through our breastworks, the Seventh being placed in the reserve.

Soon fighting commenced in the front along the river below the city. (I should have mentioned that the Sixth Div. had but one brigade in it mounted and that was the First.)

The rebels were soon driven from their first line of works and contested every inch of ground with artillery and musketry, but they were steadily driven back by the two regiments in front of the Seventh.

Up to this time the Seventh had not been engaged.

At two o'clock, P. M., the Seventh was ordered forward and formed on the right of the road in a cornfield, near the river, and moved forward in line of battle.

In this field the ground was very, wet and soft and there were many ditches several feet deep, which made it impossible to preserve a correct line, but we did the best we could under the circumstances, and by the time we reached the woodland the enemy were in full retreat down the pike.

On seeing this, Col. Garrard ordered a charge by squadrons or companies in columns of fours, and ordered Captain Rankin's battalion to charge down the pike and out to the enemy's left.

A universal shout went up from the regiment and at them they went, the woods being open and favorable for a charge.

This chase was for one and a half miles, and to within one hundred and fifty yards of a battery which opened on us and compelled us to fall back near one-fourth of a mile.

The regiment was soon formed and commenced skirmishing with the Johnnies.

Col. Garrard not being satisfied with anything short of the battery which had caused us such trouble, (it being the battery that had blockaded the Cumberland river and captured our transports, among them the *Prima Donna*, commanded by Capt. Joe. Scott, formerly of Ripley, and had withstood the combined efforts of our gun-boats and iron-clads to dislodge them,) the order to have the regiment formed in readiness to make the charge.

The order was first given to Captain Rankin to form his battalion on the slope of a hill in front of the battery, at a distance of about six hundred yards.

Co. E, Lt. Srofe, on the right, near the pike; then Co. F, Lt. Boggs, Co. B, Lt. Burton, Co. C, Lt. Archer, and Co. A, Lt. Derstine.

These companies were formed in fair musket range, and their battery was cutting the timber all around us, yet the men stood firm and unflinching.

The order of charge was by squadrons in columns of fours.

This battallion was to charge the center and to move first, Capt. Eylar was to charge down the pike with two companies, I and M, Capt. Hall was to cross the creek at its mouth and charge on the right with three companies, H, K and L.

Everything being in readiness, the word "forward!" was given.

The center battalion moved first at a walk then at a trot.

By this time the storm of leaden hail from musketry and iron missiles from the battery began to come thick and fast about us.

A shout went up and off the boys went at full speed through the fences, down steep banks and across the creek, over a narrow ridge and another creek and up to within fifty yards of the battery, when suddenly a large force of the rebel infantry raised from behind a barricade of rails and poured a deadly fire into our columns.

Captain Eylar was repulsed on the bridge, and Capt. Hall failed to cross the creek at its mouth, therefore Captain Rankin was compelled to fall back to his former position.

We dismounted and went at them again on foot. Their musketry was too high, their grape and cannister too low, creating however, considerable mortality among the horses.

Capt. Rankin was sent to signal the gunboats to come down, which they did.

Our own battery, the 4th U. S., opened on them with twelve pounders and compelled them to leave their position, the gunboats sending a few shots up the ravine after them, added speed to their flight.

They left four pieces of artillery in the woods, which we have the credit of capturing.

On the morning of the 16th, at 4 o'clock, everything was in readiness for a forward move.

We continued our pursuit on the Charlotte pike for a few miles to where the enemy had camped. At this point the enemy had left the pike and took a dirt road.

We followed this road about seven miles, and found several wagons and one piece of artillery stuck in the mud.

Here a halt was made, and Captain Rankin was ordered with his battalion to move across the country, through the fields or otherwise and endeavor to reach the Harding pike. This being accomplished, the Captain sent the following dispatch to Col. Garrard:

"COLONEL—I hold the Harding pike at the brick church and where the Franklin road crosses the said pike. Gen. Chalmers' division passed this point, taking the Franklin road, this A. M. They left some wagons here. As soon as the command could be brought up, our pursuit was continued, the Fifth Iowa Cavalry being in the advance. Skirmishing soon commenced but nothing of importance occurred on this day's march, except taking a few prisoners, twelve being the largest number at any one time."

Night coming on, we went into camp. The next morning, the 17th, our regiment took the advance, Capt. Eylar having the right of the regiment.

The pursuit was vigorously prosecuted, so much so that orderlies were sent forward several times to request Col. Garrard not to move so fast, but all to no purpose, for skirmishing had already commenced, and it is an utter impossibility to hold the Colonel back when a fight is in progress.

On we went, crossing the big Harpeth river below Franklin.

Skirmishing became quite lively, as we neared the town, but we steadily pressed them back until we arrived in full view of the town.

Capt. Rankin was ordered to take his battalion and move to the right and occupy some buildings in the suburbs.

Here the enemy was discovered, drawn up in three lines of battle, but manifesting no disposition to fight save by artillery which threw a few shells at us.

The enemy seeing our advance taking position in so close proximity to them, about faced and commenced moving off.

Col. Garrard on seeing this movement of the enemy ordered a charge.

Capt. Rankin's battalion was on the extreme right and Company E on the right of the battalion.

Now for the charge. The order was given to forward, and as soon as we crossed a small stream, it was increased to full speed.

Some columns passed through the principal streets, while others passed to the right and left of the town, and on reaching the first line of works beyond the town we captured a great many of the enemy who had taken position there.

At four hundred yards distant from their works, the enemy had planted a battery, and as soon as the confused mass we were driving could be got away, they opened up on us, but to no purpose, for we were now behind our outer line of works.

The works were also thrown up by our men on the retreat from Columbia, but were not so formidable as the first near the town.

In this position we fought the enemy more than one hour without receiving aid from any quarter whatever.

So rapid were the movements of the 7th and so far were they in advance of our own brigade that our battery moved to the point first held by Captain Rankin's battalion and mistaking us for the enemy commenced shelling us.

The shells fell in close proximity to the battalion which had been sent out to watch and guard against any movements of the enemy to flank our position.

The firing was kept up until Captain Rankin's battalion had to be removed, and had scarcely been placed in position on the left of the pike, when a battery belonging to Gen. Hatch's division opened on us from a fort on the opposite side of the river.

At this, Col. Garrard ordered the regiment to form in close column of squadrons in a low piece of ground to get out of their range, but the first being on very high ground, our position was a very hazardous one.

We were quickly deployed into line, took up our former position behind our works and again engaged the enemy.

A fire was kept up by our battery until a courier could be sent to stop it. Thus did the 7th stand for more than an hour, firm and unshaken, with the enemy's battery playing on their front at four hundred yards distant, and two of our own playing on their rear.

By this time, Gen. Hatch's Division moved up and flanked the Johnnies on our left and they lit out again, losing their artillery and many prisoners.

Here Col. Harrison commanding our brigade, congratulated Colonel Garrard on the success of the 7th, and remarked, "you have done enough for one day, I will throw the 5th Iowa in advance and you can fall in the reserve."

We moved out two miles and went into camp on a road to the right of the Columbia road.

The 5th Iowa was sent on further with orders to go across the country to intercept the enemy and if possible to capture their battery, while Hatch's Division pressed their rear.

A stand was made by the enemy between 6 and 7 o'clock p. m., in which they lost one thousand prisoners besides their killed and wounded and four pieces of artillery. Thus ended the third day's operation.

On the 17th of December nothing of interest occurred except the usual amount of skirmishing and gathering in of stragglers from a retreating army until the 25th of December, (Christmas day), our brigade had the advance and the 5th Iowa the advance of the brigade.

Skirmishing commenced but we drove the rebels back, and through Pulaski.

Just beyond the place is a large stream called Richland creek, spanned by a large covered bridge.

A charge was made by a portion of the 5th Iowa, but they were repulsed. The enemy ran six pieces of artillery into the creek without even spiking them. They also run three pieces into Duck river. They fired the bridge in several places.

Capt. Rankin was ordered to move forward with his battalion and if possible put the fire out.

The battalion set out at a brisk trot until near the bridge when they dismounted and made a rush for it, gathering from the houses along the road tubs, buckets, pans and everything else available, for carrying and throwing water on the flames, which had already penetrated to the roof in several places.

By the timely arrival of this battalion the bridge was saved with but little damage except to the roof.

In passing through the town we found several places where amunition had been piled and burnt.

On the railroad near the bridge were several cars laden with amunition, and loaded muskets, all surrounded by fire, and the discharge of these muskets was a matter of considerable annoyance to our men while working at the bridge.

Our advance soon crossed to the opposite side of the stream, even before the flames were extinguished.

Captain Rankin was left to complete the work.

The enemy had made a halt a short distance beyond and in plain view of the bridge seeing that they had been foiled in their attempt to burn the bridge, now commenced firing their ammunition in heaps all along their line and their main column began to move leaving a few skirmishers in the rear, but not however, without receiving a few shots from the 4th regular battery which was attached to our brigade.

The fire being put out on the bridge and every thing being in readiness, we moved on, the 5th Iowa being deployed as skirmishers.

They soon struck the enemy's rear driving them before them.

A mile further we came to two abandoned wagons loaded with ammunition.

We passed to the right of them and when opposite the explosion took place and thousands of blue blazes could be seen shooting heavenward. It was a magnificent sight. A few hundred yards further on were two wagons of the same kind and the same scene occurred.

Now the country became mountainous and the valleys were reduced to narrow passes between hills, and the enemy became more stubborn and resentful taking possession of every available position to plant their batteries, and impede our progress, and in short when they reached the broken country they did not drive worth a cent.

But by moving through the woods, thickets and underbrush and over the hills and rocks, and tearing our clothes almost at every step we succeeded in driving them about six miles beyond Pulaski.

At this point they made a bold stand upon a high hill, and behind barricades of logs and rails.

Some time was spent in skirmishing and getting the brigade into position. The 7th was on the right and not finding anything formidable in our front we mounted and moved by file down a very steep hill. On the opposite side of the valley, two-thirds of the way up met a few skirmishers.

The regiment was then thrown into columns of squadrons, preparatory to fighting on foot.

Capt. Rankin's battalion being in advance moved out by the right and at once engaged the enemy's skirmishers which were not more than thirty yards in advance of his line, and finding that the enemy's line extended far beyond his right, reported the same to Col. Garrard.

Here the Col. ordered him to take company F in order to extend his line further out.

This company had hardly been put in position when our line gave way on the left and center and a grand rush was made by the enemy on our right causing us to drop back. Now the driving was all on the other side.

We had found out for the first time that our line was not more than thirty yards from their main line, and our led horses two hundred and fifty yards from their battery which had all been concealed up to this time. This battery opened fire cutting the timber over our horses and at the same time a charge was made upon us.

The enemy proved to be eight brigades of infantry as we learned from a prisoner who was a little more daring than his comrades and followed a lit-

tle too close on our retreating line. Upon noticing him, one of the boys 'bout faced and took the chap in.

He also said that Forrest's cavalry had refused to fight any more and these brigades of infantry were ordered to hold us until they could get their trains out of our reach.

We fell back about four hundred yards and reformed.

In this affair, I am most happy to state we did not lose a single man. Our losses in horses was twenty-eight.

The rebels captured the 4th U. S. battery which belonged to our brigade.

This battery was situated on our left about a mile and supported by the 4th U. S. cavalry.

After the capture of our artillery the enemy at once commenced their retreat, as was ascertained by throwing forward Hatch's Division, leaving their dead and wounded on the field.

This finished Christmas day's work, a Christmas long to be remembered by the 7th O. V. C.

This was the last sight our brigade got of the rebels, except a few wounded ones lying along the road, and a few stragglers picked up, but a severe fight occurred at Sugar creek on the 26th between our advance and their rear.

We followed the enemy to near Florence where they crossed the Tennessee river.

After remaining two days in camp we marched to Mooresville with the Huntsville and Stevenson railroad sixteen miles distant, where we rested from our labors ten days, and then marched to Gravelly Springs, Ala., reaching there January 14th, 1865.

Here the 7th was ordered to build winter quarters and stabling for their horses. This was something new for the 7th being the first time in her history that she went into winter quarters.

Here we remained for some time. By order of Gen. Wilson we changed our drill from the single to the double rank formation, and while this was going on a refitting and reorganization was perfected.

In this organization the 7th was placed in the 2nd Brigade 4th Div. C. C. M. D. M. Gen. Upton commanding Division; Gen. Alexander the Brigade.

Here we remained until about the 20th of March. Capt. Rankin was placed in command of the dismounted men of his regiment, then of his brigade, and subsequently of the division, numbering over five hundred men, and led out thirty six hours in advance, with the wagon train.

On the morning of March 22nd, the whole column was in motion, crossed the Tennessee river and moved southward through the Tusculum Valley and then into the mountain regions of Alabama. We met with no opposition until about the 26th, when we were met by Rhoddy's Cavalry, which did not stay long enough to give us a second shot, but lit out at the sound of the first gun, leaving one dead.

We met and defeated the enemy at Monticelo, capturing one hundred prisoners.

The next day, we routed the combined forces of Forest, Buford and Rhoddy, in their chosen position at Ebenezer church, capturing two guns,

three hundred prisoners, and many killed and wounded. Our loss was 44 killed and 150 wounded.

We followed on, reaching Selma late in the afternoon. Around Selma was an intrenchment reaching from the Alabama river above the city, to the river below, with palisades of pine timber set in the ground and sharp at the upper end. The approach to Selma was through open ground with no protection whatever to our men.

The plan of attack was as follows:

The First Brigade, Fourth Division, composed of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Iowa, was put in position on the left of the road, and what is known as the Wilder Brigade, was placed on the right of the road. The Second Brigade, Fourth Division, composed of the 1st and 7th O. V. C. and the 5th Iowa V. C. were retained, mounted in columns, on the road, and when the two first mentioned brigades got fairly engaged in a hand to hand encounter within the enemy's parapets, the Second Brigade charged down the road mounted and into their works, killing and wounding over four hundred and capturing eleven hundred prisoners, five battle flags and thirteen pieces of artillery.

The 7th followed the flying enemy several miles beyond the city and in the darkness of the night, captured a battery, complete, including caseons, horses and harness.

Selma was taken within one hour from the time our lines were formed. In this short space of time, one of the most important places in Confederacy fell, it being situated in the midst of their iron regions, was of itself a solid machine shop, where a large portion of their ordnance was made, together with their niter works. Some of the most formidable iron works on the continent were in this region, which also fell into our hands and were destroyed.

We remained at Selma eight days, during which time we erected scaffolding out into the Alabama river and ran their unfinished ordnance from their works and dumped them into the river until they lay in heaps above the water.

During our stay here, we sent a flag of truce to Forrest, to know if he would honor or parole, and received word that he would if we could hold them. Having faith in our ability to do so, and at the expiration of eight days, we applied the torch to all Confederate property, and crossed the river on pontoons, taking the prisoners with us, we marched on to Montgomery, the capital of the State. On reaching there, they surrendered without a fight, after they had burnt a large amount of cotton.

Here the stars and bars that waved over the first rebel Congress that ever assembled on this Continent, meekly bowed its head at the first sight of a Federal soldier with arms in his possession, without even waiting for a salute, and up went the "old flag of the Union," which in its stead, waved triumphantly over the dome of the house where Jeff. Davis called together his first Congress, amid the shouts and songs of the brave men who so proudly bore it there.

After remaining here three days, we took up our line of march for

Columbus, Ga. The 7th going by the way of Andersonville for the purpose of releasing our prisoners held there. When within four miles of the place, they were met by a flag of truce, evidently to gain time. This was not recognized by the 7th, who charged the place, but only in time to see the train moving out with the mass of skeletons caused by starvation. Some eighty-four of our men which begged all description, not being able to be removed, were left in the prison pen.

The 7th joined the command in time to participate in the fight at Columbus, which was reached about the middle of the afternoon, when 1st O. V. C. charged a bridge which had previously been strewn with cotton saturated with turpentine, and on reaching the bridge the enemy applied the torch and the whole thing was in a blaze, which caused their return, when skirmishing and an artillery duel continued until after dark.

On the west side of Columbus runs the Chatahucha river, it was spanned by the bridges; one was destroyed, as above stated, and the others were defended by forts, garrisoned by infantry and artillery.

A portion of the First Brigade, composed of the three Iowa regiments, were dismounted for the purpose of storming these forts.

The Second Brigade was retained, mounted. At 9 o'clock, P. M., a move was made. The Iowa men cleared the enemy's works on their third assault, when the Second Brigade charged, mounted, over the bridge into the city.

In this, the enemy lost over three hundred killed and wounded, one thousand and five hundred prisoners, twenty-four guns, eight battle flags and a vast amount of munitions of war. We remained here over the next day, and the next morning set fire to all the buildings containing army stores, and taking up our march for Macon, Ga., amid the bursting of shell and the explosion of ammunition, causing the roofs and timbers to ascend heavenward, and the mass of bricks and mortar to fall inward. Caused by the vacuum from the explosion from within. The atmospheric pressure pushed them inward.

Columbus, Ga., may be set down as the last battle of the war for the preservation of the Union.

We continued our march towards Macon and when within twelve miles of that place, we were met by Gen. Howel Cobb, bearing a flag of truce, requesting us to go into camp where we were; that Lee had surrendered, Richmond was captured, and that Sherman and Johnson had agreed upon an armistice of ninety days. But Gen. Wilson refused to recognize it, and told Gen Cobb that he would march on to Macon, and that he, Cobb, could fight or surrender.

We reached Macon, April 21st, 1865, when Cobb surrendered the city and his forces without a struggle.

Here we received a telegram from Gen. Grant, to cease hostility. That Lee had surrendered, Richmond had fallen, Johnson was surrounded, with Sherman in his rear and Sheridan in front, and would have to surrender or be captured.

We remained at Macon a few days, when we received orders to send out scouts in every direction to apprehend Jeff. Davis who was trying to make his way into Texas, whereupon our brigade, under Gen. Alexander,

moved north to Atlanta, Ga. From this point we sent out a scouting party under Lt. Yoman, of the 1st O. V. C., and all disguised in the rebel uniform. This party got in company with Davis' escort, at Greenville, South Carolina, and while riding together on the road, the rebels suspecting all was not right, drew their revolvers and opened fire on our scouts. None of the 7th were injured except John Gates, of Co. E, he being shot through the head, below the eye, from which he recovered.

In the meantime, Jeff. Davis was captured by the detachment of the First Wisconsin and the Second Michigan and brought to Atlanta, Ga. The 7th O. V. C. took charge of him and guarded him to Augusta, Ga. From here we marched to Chattanooga, Tenn., from thence to Nashville, and went into camp at Edgefield, where our horses and equipments were duly turned over, and the last company of the regiment was mustered out July the 4th, and paid to the 7th, 1865, when we returned home by the way of Louisville, Ky., to Cincinnati.

In writing this history, I have endeavored to do exact justice to all, so far as I knew, and if there is any errors in this narrative, it is that of omission, having had to write exclusively from memory, and in all probability there are omissions.

While we would not deprive any regiment of her laurels, we believe the 7th O. V. C., for the services rendered and the number of times she was under fire, stands second to no regiment from Maine to California.

THE END.



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